

# Back Box Story 08



AUGUST  
1988

BEACH BOYS STOMP - Aug '88

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES  
(per six issues)

United Kingdom  
Europe/USA  
Australasia/Far East  
\*includes Air Mail

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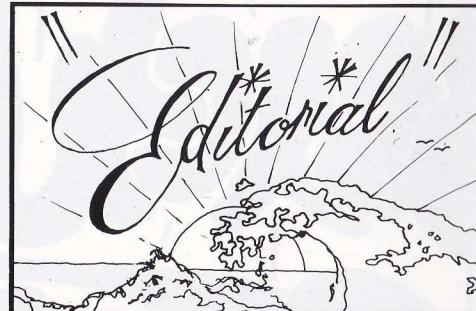
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as possible can make it this year at this venue, plus the usual pot pourri of videos, live music, auction, raffle and quiz. Mike, Alan and Bruce have all recorded messages for us. See you in September.

Birthday greetings to Alan Jardine, 46 on 3rd September. Alan's politeness and consideration shown to Roy and me back in July '87 is not forgotten.

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE: 53, 55, 57, 58, 59, 62, 63, 64, 65, 67 & 68. £1.50 per copy - Overseas: add 50p per copy.

MIKE



Well, after all the years and months of waiting we now have the Brian Wilson album to judge for ourselves. All the speculation like "What will the vocals be like, will the songs be any good?" etc. can now be answered and I'm sure opinions will be varied and divided. Personally I think the LP is an almost total triumph (ie 10 out of 11 tracks) and is well worth the long wait. It also proves to all the fans with blind faith that Brian Wilson can truly make a great album (and I mean since PET SOUNDS twenty two years ago), their patience has finally been rewarded.

Brian is now 46 so obviously he is not going to sound the same as he did when he was 24, especially after all the abuse his body has taken and the way he was singing in the seventies. His voice has made a remarkable recovery, his lead vocals sound mature and confident while his backing vocals and harmonies are unbelievable. They are of a quality one would not have thought possible three or four years ago.

My faith waned in 1985 when Brian's contributions to the Steve Levine-produced album of that year failed to show the spark I believed Brian still had. I am more than pleased that I was wrong. This time Brian is really back.

July turned out to be a bumper month - apart from Brian's LP and single the Beach Boys' new single 'Kokomo' appeared earlier than expected. Happy days are indeed here again.

Convention time again and it's our 10th Anniversary. Who would have thought back in 1979 at that old church hall in Exeter where thirty or so fans attended the first convention, 10 years later the Beach Boys UK Convention would become an annual calendar event almost like Christmas or a birthday. I hope as many

## ALBUM REVIEWS

BRIAN WILSON - Sire No WX 157 The Album to make your blues just 'Melt Away'.

If you have any doubts as to whether to buy this LP because it's a solo album rather than a group effort don't hesitate, this is the goods. Good songs, good vocals, great harmonies, great melodies, catchy hooks BRIAN WILSON has it all. Track by track in a nutshell:-

"Love And Mercy" - The first single and it sets the mood for the album - the harmonies on this were worth waiting years for. "Love And Mercy" is what you need tonight and tomorrow and the next day.

"Walkin' The Line" - the sentiments in this are much the same as on Johnny Cash's old country classic "I Walk The Line" but this is something else. Nagging melody guest appearance from Terence Trent D'Arby, sure to gain attention, but it deserves to anyway, possible single.

"Melt Away" - unbelievable; fantastic the type of song we've been waiting for Brian to do for years, my favourite on the album. The tag is wonderful, a bona fide classic.

"Baby Let Your Hair Grow Long" - on first listen sounds slight, but repeated plays prove that nobody writes songs that work their way into your brain like Brian. You will find yourself singing it for days after you hear it. A beaut.

"Little Children" - familiar from '70s demo version known then as "They're Marching Along", great sound and production but it's the familiarity and the lyrics that take the edge off it.

"One For The Boys" - no mistaking who this is for, acapella and shows the guys how to do it without any effort. Short and sweet, a return to the days of "Our Prayer" and "Mama Says".

"There's So Many" - pure Brian, a bit plodding but great singing from Brian, the song doesn't really go anywhere and it's perhaps one of the lesser tracks but still highly enjoyable none the less. Still an average track by Brian is great by anyone else's standards.

"Night Time" - is delight time for the ears another catchy track that was once a possible single and also an early album title. Crickets from Mount Vernon and Fairway make a guest appearance on this up tempo bopper. Perfect for in-car entertainment.

"Let it Shine" - co-authored and co-produced by Jeff Lynne a man with a great sense of making commercial records who comes up trumps with this, the best bet for a hit single on the album? It also features Brian's best lead vocal. A mid-tempo shuffler.

"Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight" - Up-tempo, big production, lots of overlapping vocals. Sounds like a potential smash single and I'm sure Ronnie Spector would like to get hold of it - the last song to be added to the album and it's another Wilson goodie.

"Rio Grande" - this one evokes memories of "Heroes And Villains" and "Cabin Essence" with its many changes, Western Imagery, vocal textures and sheer brilliance; the type of adventurous material we have wanted and waited for from Brian since SMILE was scrapped and it echoes that project also. "Rio Grande" almost encapsulates Brian's entire career in one eight minute suite. If Brian can only go on from here then there will be much to look forward to in the years to come. To whoever encouraged Brian to work harder on the material and vocals we should be truly thankful. "Rio Grande" is one of the best things Brian's ever done.

"He Couldn't Get His Poor Old Body To Move" - B-side of the "Love And Mercy" single - thanks to Brian for giving us non album flips. This is a collaboration with Lindsay Buckingham and you can almost sing "Da Doo Ron Ron" along with this. Picks up from where "Too Much Sugar" left off, this time exulting the joys of exercise as opposed to dieting.

**SUMMARY:** The album just gets better with each playing and shows endless promise for the future. BRIAN WILSON rates with the very best Beach Boys albums and only time will tell just how high. Can the album capture the imagination of the record buying public and become the hit it deserves? Something of the magnitude of Paul Simon's GRACELAND, John Fogarty's CENTERFIELD or to a lesser degree Robbie Robertson's EPONYMOUS album, maybe somewhere in between is a possibility. But it all depends on radio plays and one or two hit singles. Critically so far the response has been terrific. I'm sure everyone involved with or who reads Beach Boys STOMP will do their best to help it on its way.

MIKE

-00-

THAT WAS THEN ... THIS IS NOW

There is, of course, no possibility of my being anything like as objective as I should be when reviewing BRIAN WILSON, for ever since that fateful summer of 1975, when Nicky Kent's three part examination of this enigma that is Brian Douglas Wilson first sucked me - unwitting then, wiser by far now - into the depths and crevices of the still-ongoing Beach Boys psychodrama, Brian has always been the focus of my wide-angle Hawthorn snapshot. And rightly so, for as recent years have underlined and highlighted, the Beach Boys without Brian's interested involvement are a sorry animal indeed (as the latest 45 attests - the only emotion "Komono" evokes from me is one of wonder that it took four people to concoct such fluff).

And yet... besotted as I may be (and I freely admit it), inevitably there came moments of cold, hard reality when the evidence, available and past, was sorted, sifted, weighed and compared... and the consensus, more often than not was that, desireable as a Brian Wilson solo album might be in theory or imagination, the reality could be nothing less than, at best, an embarrassment. "Let's Go To Heaven In My Car" served only to reinforce such gloomy prognostications; a very average song none too well executed. I much preferred the flip - but then I've ever been a sucker for dumb songs and nursery rhymes. Selected peeps into the Work-In-Progress soothed some fears, raised others. The material was good, the vocals less so. I was a worried scribe...

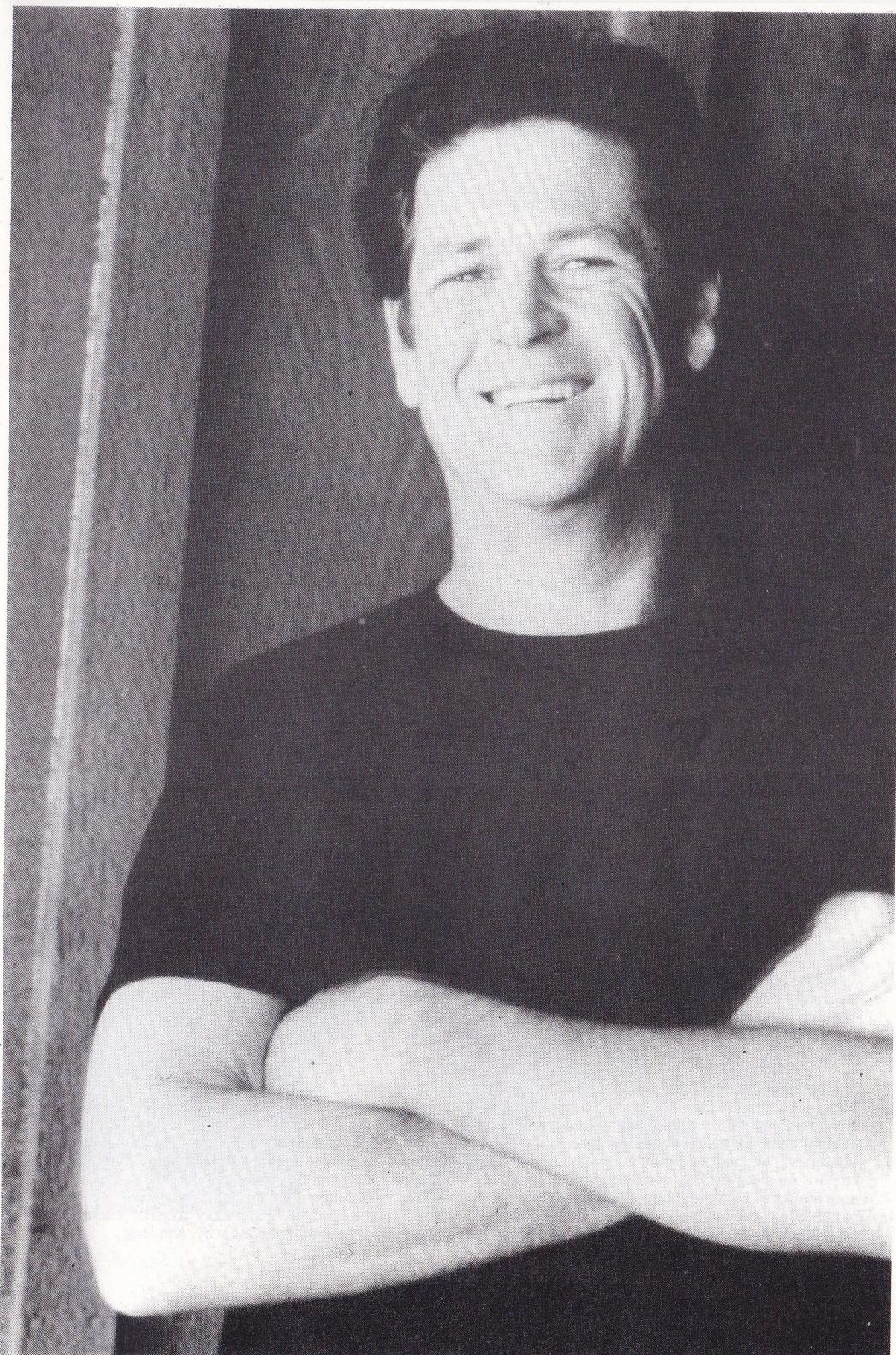
Until the basic truth was pointed out to me, or rather two. One, these days, being able to sing even vaguely well is hardly a major factor affecting chart success... and two, standing Brian vintage '87 upside the mid-sixties model was, at best, an exercise in futility: even if he hadn't been a major sponsor/consumer of the American tobacco industry during the seventies, Brian is now some two decades down the chronological scale. It was time to ditch the past and take a different angle.

Students of my editorials and sundry other articles over the past three and one-half years since a Brian Wilson solo set was first mooted will recall that my extreme doubts of any such artifact ever gracing the racks of my local record store slowly gave way to an equally healthy scepticism that that damn thing would be any good; to quote from STOMP 64, "I'm not expecting too much at all. I'd love to be amazed and surprised, but I'll settle for two good tracks out of ten..."

I am amazed. And surprised, not to mention delighted, relieved, pleased, proud and any other positive emotion you care to name. BRIAN WILSON, though by no means perfect or flawless, is still far, far better than I'd dared to imagine in my most optimistic moments, and it is but a beginning...

Comparisons are largely pointless and commonly odious: this said, BRIAN WILSON bears closest semblance to PACIFIC OCEAN BLUE in terms of musical texture and emotional depth, whilst being simultaneously a progression from the LOVE YOU-ADULT/CHILD material and execution of some eleven years ago, but without the artistic capitulation required to involve the rest of the band.

Needless to say, Brian's past musical excursions crop up throughout the set, sometimes obviously (the 'Night Blooming Jasmine' segment of "Rio Grande"), sometimes more subtly (the bridge of one song, the title of another) and often so fleetingly as to almost escape notice beyond the "wasn't that from...?" stage. Indeed, a case could be made for Brian's using his album as a final expiation of his days with the Beach Boys before moving on to more weighty matters. An attic-clearing exercise - or exorcise, if you will.



Such an "it sounds like..." game could be spun out ad nauseum, for the indisputable fact is that it sounds like Brian Wilson in the late eighties, finally realising his musical vision unhindered by people with a lesser talent. That this vision is, in the final analysis, highly personal (sometimes verging on the embarrassing) should come as a surprise to only the most recent of STOMP subscribers for, more than any other single figure of the rock era, Dylan and Lennon included, Brian has chronicled his often troubled world in music and words (including also the absence of same). Nothing has changed, as

these lines from "Melt Away" attest; "I won't let you see me suffer/Oh, not me/ I won't let you see me cryin'/Oh, not me/I won't let you hear me sighin'/Oh, not me". The pain, then, is still there, but tempered by a sense of resignation and a slowly dawning hope of something better to come - "I feel just like an island/Until I see you smilin'/Then my cares just melt away...". Elsewhere, even in the jauntier numbers, there's a residual aura of lost yearning, the "wouldn't-it-have-been-nice?" syndrome, if you like. Even the acapella "One For The Boys" has a bitter-sweet tinge, and the possibility of it being a valediction to his one-time collaborators in some of the finest pure pop you'll ever hear is very strong, both in spirit and apparent reality. Perhaps this is the overall key to BRIAN WILSON: the realisation that for progress to occur, old ties must be severed, chances taken - anticipation mixed with a glance back over the shoulder, the knowledge of bridges at least partially burned.

Thankfully, the way ahead is lit with a golden promise, the only apparent problem being which direction to pursue: the personal, expiatory path illustrated by "Melt Away", "Let It Shine"... the top 40 AM course evinced on "Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight", "Night Time" and "I Walk The Line"... or the impressionistic sound palate of "Rio Grande"? My preference is for the current mix, with maybe just a slight leaning to the personal... and, of course, the musical lunacy of the likes of "Little Children" and "He Couldn't Get His Poor Ol' Body To Move" (the B-side of the first 45, which had me laughing like a loon on the first hearing, and still makes me smile like a slice of melon some dozen airings later.) (Surely, that's being unkind to melons - C.W.) "Little Children" could be seen as a slight embarrassment at first... until the names "Carnie" and "Wendy" appear towards the end of the song, and the realisation dawns that Brian isn't singing about just any kids, but recalling the days when his girls were little.

BRIAN WILSON shares with PACIFIC OCEAN BLUE another aspect in that no single cut is in any way objectionable. Granted, "There's So Many" may well find itself the least used track on my CD program, and to my ears, "Love And Mercy", whilst a pleasant LP cut, strikes me as a slightly bizarre choice for the lead 45, being lyrically naïve in the extreme (but then again, these days, lyrics seem to matter even less than singing ability in the heady climes of the top 40).

And therein lies one of the flaws of BRIAN WILSON - occasionally dubious and sometimes downright dippy lyrics. I'll cite no other culprits (you'll find them easily enough), and merely note that in the past, and even here on this album Brian has penned superb couplets, so there is no excuse. Come back, Tony Asher... or Van Dyke... Jack Rieley even. Or get someone to sit with brian, someone to bounce ideas off.

The other reservation I harbour concerns Brian's voice. Granted it's no worse really than, say, Steve Winwood, and when he's working with someone who'll push him (as on "Let It Shine") is more than adequate... but on some cuts - "Night Time" come immediately to mind - he's cruising, skirting the limits of acceptability. As with the lyrics, he can and has done better, and must do so next time out. As Van Dyke observed a few months ago, "I'd like to take him out back and kick his ass about a little." Could be worth a try...

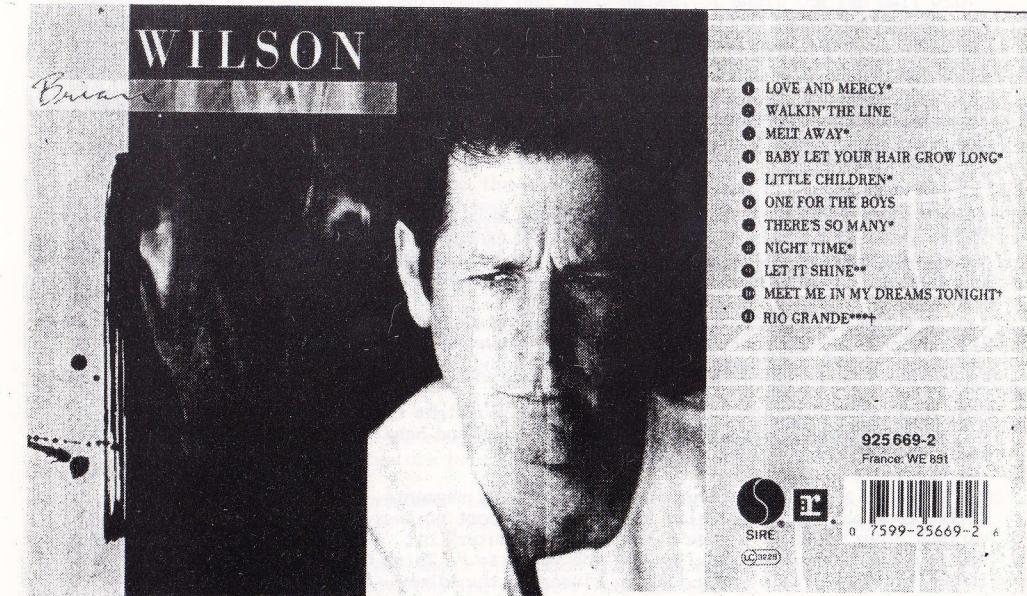
Of the execution, composition, arrangement and recording of BRIAN WILSON, there is little to criticise and much to applaud. A few too many keyboards and not enough 'real' instruments? For the older guard, maybe... but then, didn't we tell everyone who would listen back in the seventies how Brian had mastered synthesized sound? The younger listener, of course, won't notice it. On many songs, perhaps Brian seems a mite too intent on recreating a mid-sixties textural ambience, but that could just be my ears, and nowhere is it either distressing or distracting. Far from it: "Melt Away" in particular evokes memories of 1965-66 and elsewhere the touch is generally light, except on "There's So Many", a somewhat plodding arrangement redeemed (almost) by the tag.

Not surprisingly, "Rio Grande" - in many aspects the most ambitious cut - stands apart from the rest of the set and, more than any other track, demands repeated playing before full access is gained. As well as painting a vivid sound-picture of western mythology from the viewpoint of a riverboat (a strong indication that one possible future for Brian could lie in soundtrack commissions), "Rio Grande" contains the greatest proportion of musical references, both released and (as yet) archival - there is truly much to Smile about in this series of vignettes and cameos, and here the lyrical simplicity enhances the nature of the piece.

So, finally it has been done, and Brian has taken the step that all seasoned Wilson-Watchers have been urging and begging him to take for some twenty-odd years, and it has been a firm, authoritative pace forward (glance over the shoulder notwithstanding...). The next question is - what now? Where next? (I make that two questions, Andrew.- C.W.) The music press-reviews thus far bring to mind the reception afforded John Fogerty on the release of his 1985 comeback album, the general tenor being "it's great to have you back!". Thus Brian's artistic credentials can be considered as firmly re-established, and to some extent, the commercial fate of BRIAN WILSON is therefore irrelevant, though I'm sure Sire and Warners would disagree on the latter point... and let's be honest, wouldn't it be nice to see Brian's name on the charts? I think we will, I really do. Probably not with "Love And Mercy" (though stranger things have happened...), but with "Let It Shine" (the follow-up, possibly I'm told) and "Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight", which just begs the 7" format. Prediction isn't my line (i.e. I usually get it wrong); but so happy am I with this album that I'm prepared to put up the following opinions in public: given a top 40 single in "Let It Shine" and/or "Meet Me..." (maybe even top 20?), then I can see Brian doing something the Beach Boys haven't done since 1976 - crack the album top 40. But even the critics can't predict that - it's down to Joe Public...

To return to the What Now / Where Next? (from which we seem to have strayed): obviously a second album (preferably before 1999, please...). A tour would be nice, too, low-key club dates. But spare a thought for the Beach Boys - all beginnings are performe an ending of some sort, and they've just lost Brian. Which is to say, everything.

AGD



If you want to hear PET SOUNDS then reach out and grab the album with the goats on the front because BRIAN WILSON ain't it - nor is, was or will anything else be in this universe. What we do have on this album is Brian showing us what he can do now - and it's plenty. Though the magic of the past may have dimmed, there is still a glowing spark, a special something that makes you smile halfway through a track. Sadly missing are any soft, romantic ballads which is a shame, but despite the many producers/writers involved in the project there are frequent allusions to past glories - and why not? BRIAN WILSON, the album, has its high spots and some... not so high spots but it's a very big step forward in the rejuvenation of Brian Wilson, the artist, and is an astonishing achievement for one whose talent, many of us believed, was lost forever. What you get is.....

Love & Mercy - A solid, plodding beat laced with synth arpeggios and superb backing vocals. Like most of the tracks, Brian's lead sounds a trifle 'shout-y' but the glorious acapella section towards the end restores the faith immediately. And who else would stop the drum track halfway through the first chorus?!

Walkin' the Line - Starts with a light feel to the verse gradually building via hand-claps to a strong clumping chorus line - for me not a standout track.

Melt Away - An easy-paced chonk, chonk, chonk backs this gorgeous song which features backing vocals straight out of 1965 - nice fat ones with resolving major sevenths - and a nice clanky set of tubular bells; only the vibrato on Brian's lead betrays the passing years. The middle eight is fascinating with a "God Only Knows" clip-clop, rattling snare drum and timpani, and tinkling calliope while a shimmering, summer-y fade completes the experience.

Baby Let Your Hair Grow Long - A halting, slightly clumsy synth riff with Brian singing an insistent melody vaguely reminiscent of "Roller Skating Child". This one will eat into your brain with its solid percussion and eerie, wailing musical saw, (move over theramin) - it could only be a Brian Wilson song.

Little Children - This is not the nursery rhyme fodder we heard as a demo some time ago - it's faster.

One For The Boys - An acapella track in the old style but with Brian singing a high lead of "whoa-oh-oh's". Maybe it's just a trifle laboured and the last five chords feel a bit dodgy but it's as good as "You're Welcome" any day.

There's So Many - Although this has a slightly dirgy feel there's plenty going on here with tinkling bells, heavy-echoed blocks, pounding bass synth, high whistling, chords that change channels on alternate beats plus some massed vocals from Brian. Oh yes, there's even the harp from "Surfer Girl"!

Night Time - Nice spooky whistle noises intro this off-beat rocker that reminds one of "Wild Honey". A simple theme but beautifully executed with supremely confident, brash vocals and marred only by the farty sax at the end which had obviously wandered into the wrong studio by mistake - this track is a real corker.

Let It Shine - Acapella, heavy repeat-echoed vocals before a sparse organ track comes in behind Brian's plaintive voice, building to a superb climax with more gorgeous bracking vocals at 30,000 feet and climbing - sit back and let this one wash away your troubles and cares.

Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight - Not the ballad you might expect from the title but a neo-Spectorish busy track with enthusiastic drums and hand claps. This sounds great on radio - still can't believe those vocals.

Rio Grande - An adventurous piece comprising many segments, some of which seem to be culled from past exploits, also featuring steamboat noises, a genuine cattle drive and various other effects. There's a "Cool, Cool Water" bit, a "Fire" bit and a couple of sections where you can actually sing the verse to "A Thing Or Two" over the chords. It's certainly an epic and a fitting closer to the album - love those drums!

BRIAN WILSON is Brian Wilson - buy it, savour it and treasure it for the rest of your life.

CHRIS WHITE

## BRIAN WILSON

Reserving the right to have my own opinion about this most hopefully awaited album of the 1980s even though I got mine free, BRIAN WILSON could assuredly be a whole lot worse, but by the same token, is far from the masterpiece every STOMP reader should have wanted. Landy may have saved Brian's life, but that doesn't entitle him to write songs with him, any more than the receipt of free tickets for a BB gig should force me to write something other than the truth. They were going through the motions, and that's my last word on that subject.

By the same token, I suspect that I can be rather more objective about Brian's album than some of you, and for my money, this album has two hits, "Let It Shine" and "Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight". These are not potential hits, they are definite hits, at least if they're released as singles - but just remember "East Meets West". "Rio Grande" is the carrot that is held out for STOMP readers, and not only sounds as if it might be from SMILE, is not dissimilar to bits of that legendary item, so AGD tells me (and he should know). The first eight tracks on the album, I'm afraid, suffer from the commercial shortcomings of the vast majority of the post-1960s output of both Brian and his erstwhile group. They may be special to you lot, but to the man in the street, they're average at best. I can already hear the cries of "You'll like those when you've played them a few times", to which I must retort that I didn't have to play "God Only Knows" or "Good Vibes" or even "Lady Lynda" more than once to know how good they were, and I didn't have to play "Sumahaha" twice to know it was rubbish, but that's my opinion.

Of the three tracks Brian wrote by himself, "One For The Boys" comes off best because it doesn't have lyrics. Brian is now a rather poor Lyricist, sad to relate, although maybe some of these are dumb enough to have been classics of the '60s - but it ain't the '60s any more, despite what the charts might suggest. Ask yourselves this important question: How much did Brian have to do with "Let it Shine" apart from singing it and how much did Jeff Lynne do? Now substitute "Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight" for the song and Andy Paley for Jeff Lynne, and ask yourselves the same question. If your answers are similar to mine, and you also tend to the feeling that SMILE is over-rated, you'll probably agree with my conclusion that this is far better than it might have been, but still some way short (nine elevenths) of the album we hope Brian might one day make. The signs are positive, but the corner has really only just been turned. I await the fan mail with interest.

## POLL TIME

JOHN TOBLER

As always we are interested in knowing STOMP readers' favourite tracks from the latest recordings. This time a two-in-one poll: First a BRIAN WILSON list including all eleven songs on the album plus single sides "He Couldn't Get His Poor Old Body To Move", "Let's Go To Heaven In My Car" and "Too Much Sugar". Just list them in order of preference one to fourteen. Just so the Beach Boys don't feel left out and as they have a new single released, list in your favourite order the last five singles with Beach Boys involvement. "Rock 'n' Roll To The Rescue", "California Dreaming", "Wipeout" with the Fat Boys, "Happy Endings" with Little Richard and the new 45 "Kokomo". Just jot them on a piece of paper or the back of renewal forms and send them in to the STOMP address. When I get enough lists in I'll publish the results in a future issue.

## COMPETITION

To win a brand spanking new copy of the great BRIAN WILSON LP, just answer the following easy questions.

1. "Love And Mercy" is the new Brian single. Name three other singles, A & B sides, that feature Brian's name on the label.
2. Russ Titelman co-produced "Love And Mercy" with Brian. Give the title of the great Brian production that Russ co-wrote with Brian in the mid-sixties.
3. Give the titles of all the Brian Wilson compositions officially released by both the Beach Boys and The Honeys / American Spring. That is, the same songs that they've both recorded.

Answers next issue.

MIKE

## REVIEWS

The Beach Boys: "Kokomo" (3.34), written by M Love, T Melcher, J Phillips, S MacKenzie, produced by Terry Melcher. B side - "Tutti Fruitti" by Little Richard.

ELEKTRA US No. 7-69385 from the "Cocktail" soundtrack.

The new Beach Boys single for 1988, Kokomo (which is apparently an island off the coast of Florida, is an exotic tropical treat for Beach Boys fans, a contemporary summer single unlike almost anything they've recorded before. "Sunshine" (from KEEPIN' THE SUMMER ALIVE) is the only song that springs to mind bearing any similarity.

Lead vocals from Mike and Carl show them both to be in fine form. A catchy chorus of "Aruba, Jamaica ooh I wanna take ya to Bermuda, Bahama come on pretty momma, Key largo, Montego baby why don't we go" may just swing it to hit status but after the failure of "Rock 'n' Roll To The Rescue", "California Dreamin'" and "Happy Endings" it's hard to see how. Maybe if the movie "Cocktail" starring Tom Cruise is a success interest will be generated for "Kokomo". I like it and normally would be quite excited about a new Beach Boys single but with all the new stuff from Brian out at the same time most of my enthusiasm is directed towards Brian. Still it's always good to have something new from the 'boys' and at the very least it should be a big adult contemporary hit which may spill over into the top 100 chart.

Buy both the singles "Kokomo" and Brian's "Love And Mercy" as there's room for both in the charts. At least Brian has given us a non-album 'B' side whereas all you get here is another song from the soundtrack, the original version of "Tutti Fruitti" by Little Richard. Getting to be a habit the Beach Boys and Little Richard on vinyl together.

<b>MIKE</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>NEW ▶</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>KOKOMO</b> ELECTRIC 7-69385	<b>THE BEACH BOYS</b>
	<b>48</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>13</b>	◆ ICEHOUSE
	<b>49</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>—</b>	<b>2</b>	◆ BILL MEDLEY
	<b>50</b>	<b>NEW ▶</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>ONE GOOD WOMAN</b> FULL MOON 7-27824/WARNER BROS.	PETER CETERA

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BILLBOARD JULY 23, 1988

"Since God Invented Girls" - Elton John  
(from the LP - REG STRIKES BACK - Rocket 834-701-1(LP) 2(CD)

Elton John has been linked with members of the Beach Boys many times before starting in 1974 with the CARIBOU LP on "Don't Let The Sun Go Down On Me", surely one of Elton's best ever songs. Featured backing vocalists on that song were Carl Wilson (unmistakably), Bruce Johnston, Billy Hinsche and Toni Tenille. In the mid '70s Elton also announced that he had written a song for the Beach Boys, "Chameleon", that he sent to them but they never replied. Bruce Johnston next appeared in 1976 as a backing vocalist on the BLUE MOVES album singing on "Chameleon" (which Elton decided to record himself), "Crazy Water", "Between Seventeen and Twenty" and "Someone's Final Song" - all backing vocals were recorded at the Beach Boys Brother Studio. In 1980 Bruce again sang on Elton's "21 at 33" LP the song "Dear God". Now in 1980 on Elton's new album Carl, Bruce and one time Beach Boys back up musician/singer Adrian Baker all contribute backing vocals on "Since God Invented Girls". It certainly recalls memories of "Don't Let The Sun etc." being in Elton's classic ballad style and is especially significant because Brian Wilson is mentioned in the lyrics, "Now I know what Brian Wilson meant" ("I wish they all could be...?"). It's a superb performance by all concerned and hopefully a future 45. Elton or Bernie Taupin must have been on a bit of a Beach Boys kick when they wrote the songs for REG STRIKES BACK because in the song "Goodbye Marlon Brando" the lyrics contain "Say goodbye to Wendy, say goodbye to Rhonda, say goodbye to the Beach Boys, from Palisades to Kona". Elton has written many great songs over the years and I'm sure everybody likes at least one Elton John song and "Since God Invented Girls" joins his long list of classics. Meanwhile talking of Adrian Baker, Gidea Park have a new single out on Adrian's Tiger Records label called "(Lai-Lo-Lah) Limbo"/"Back In '65" unashamedly aimed at the European disco/holidaymakers market. Both sides are written by Adrian Baker-Martin Lawford and the disc is available on 7" TGE 71 and 12" TCR1. Good luck to them with it.

ADDITIONAL BACKING VOCALS ON SINCE GOD INVENTED GIRLS  
ADRIAN BAKER, BRUCE JOHNSTON, CARL WILSON, ELTON JOHN

MIKE

10 -00-

## CONCERT REVIEWS

CONCERT REVIEW: Cascade Showroom, Caesars Hotel & Casino Stateline, Nevada. Sunday 21st Feb 1988

On a recent trip to the States I was lucky enough to catch up with the Beach Boys and was present at several gigs; three shows in Lake Tahoe, and one on opening night at Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas, but I will concentrate on the performance at Caesar's, Lake Tahoe Sunday 21 Feb 88.

Stateline Lake Tahoe is on the borderline of California and Nevada and consequently, like Vegas, is not subject to the stringent U.S. gambling laws. This, combined with the stunningly beautiful scenery around Stateline, make it a very pleasant combination of ski, alpine and gambling resort.

The Beach Boys played three nights, (four shows) at Caesar's, Lake Tahoe which is the largest and most prestigious hotel/casino in the area.

The Cascade Showroom where the group played, was a dinner table affair with a capacity of approximately 2500 - 3000. Needless to say it was packed out for the Beach Boys.

After 25 mins or so of a comedian doing a warm up act, the beach Boys assembled on stage at around 21.25, a few minutes late. As the dramatic opening chord of "California Girls" filled the theatre the audience let out such a roar that Mike exclaimed, "Sounds like a rowdy crowd out there."

After delivering a powerful rendition of "Darlin'", the boys launched straight into "Dance, Dance, Dance" which had the punters well warmed up ready to relish the wholesome harmonies of "Wouldn't It Be Nice".

Then a proud Mike announced, "We'd like to introduce the man who's responsible for writing 97.2% of our music,... Mr Brian Wilson. He's just been putting the finishing touches to his solo album, but he's here with us tonight in Lake Tahoe to show that he's once and always a Beach Boy. And now he's going to sing one of his earliest compositions."

Yes folks, the man himself was there, and he gave the best performance of "In My Room" I have ever heard. More about Brian later.

Carl seemed inspired by his big brother's presence and sang "God Only Knows" so sweetly.

Brian took up the lead again with "Sloop John B" after which Mike engaged the audience with his usual patter, which included comments about the recent induction into the Rock 'n' Roll Hall of Fame and being honoured by the American Music Industry Awards of Merit. Mostly the same stuff but nevertheless highly entertaining and appropriate.

The car medley served its purpose of shifting the show into third gear, and afterwards an interesting exchange took place between Mike and Brian.

After declaring to the audience that Brian was going to "Sing a song that he wrote and we all harmonise on it. It's all very pretty ... "Surfer Girl".". He then quizzed Brian, "Brian..." (pause for effect) "When did you write this song?" Brian replied, "1961" "Mike... 1961... before my time." Still not letting a slightly anxious Brian off the hook, Mike asked, "Brian... what exactly were the circumstances leading to the composition of this particular song?" Brian replied, "None... there were none... Let's do the number... Let's do the number." After hilarious laughter from the band, Brian sang his heart out for "Surfer Girl" and the crowd showed due appreciation.

After a spot on "Getcha Back" there followed a most satisfying "Good Vibrations". Without wishing to sound a bit O.T.T., I must say that this was the most enjoyable performance of "Vibes" that I have ever been blessed to hear. The whole group seemed to be inspired by the presence of Brian... and it showed. Carl's lead carved a path for the group to shine with precise, exciting vocals. Punctuated by Mike Kowalski's drums

(continued on page 14.)

# what the papers said

## The Album: Really Good Vibrations

By PAUL GREIN

"BRIAN WILSON." Sire/Reprise.

This long-awaited solo debut by the mastermind behind the Beach Boys' hits is not only the comeback of the year, it's a strong case for the argument that genius isn't a perishable commodity.

*Genius* is a word that is overused in pop music, but Wilson is one of the artists—along with Ray Charles, Lennon-McCartney, Paul Simon, Stevie Wonder and Prince—who undoubtedly qualifies. For all his gifts, however, the 46-year-old Wilson was long ago written off as a creative burnout who had said all he had to say by the age of 25. But the beauty of the melodies and harmonies here indicates that while Wilson's genius may have lain dormant, it wasn't exhausted.

Evening Standard.

## Beach Boy Brian surfs back

BRIAN Wilson, the Beach Boy who became a recluse and obese drug addict, today appears on the brink of one of pop music's most extraordinary comebacks.

Critics are proclaiming his first solo album, called simply Brian Wilson, a triumph and a potential album of the year—even before its release in America tomorrow.

"I can't believe the feed-

back we're getting. It's going to go through the roof," the 46-year-old singer said.

### Plagued

The album was hailed by the Los Angeles Times as a "strong case for the argument that genius isn't a perishable commodity."

Five years ago the man regarded as the soul of the legendary group was plagued

by emotional problems and sinking deeper into drug and alcohol addiction. He weighed 340 lbs—he's now just 190 lbs—and refused to bathe in case snakes came out of the showerhead.

His psychologist, Dr Eugene Landy, said: "Brian was so obese he had difficulty walking. He couldn't tie his shoelaces and in fact spent most of his time in bed."

### Brian Wilson Top Ten LPs.

Beach Boys singer and songwriter currently returning to the pop scene with a self-titled solo album.

"Pet Sounds," the Beach Boys  
"Sail Away," Randy Newman  
"Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band," the Beatles  
"Graceland," Paul Simon  
"Hearts and Bones," Paul Simon  
"Four Freshmen and Five Trombones," the Four Freshmen  
"Voices in Love," the Four Freshmen  
"First Affair," the Four Freshmen  
"Rubber Soul," the Beatles  
"Stevie Wonder's Original Musiquarium," Stevie Wonder

### BEACH BOYS AI

Jardine, Mike Love, Carl Wilson and Bruce Johnston were made honorary citizens of Memphis during two SRO shows in the town. Seems the group have performed more local concerts than any other major extant band—or so it's claimed...



A SIGN of the times? Ex-Beach Boy BRIAN WILSON is playing a history teacher in the TV series *The New Leave It To Beaver*

## Is there a 'Smile' for Beach Boys fans?

If there's anything that's almost as exciting to Beach Boys fans as Brian Wilson's first solo album, it's the imminent release of several of the band's vintage albums on compact disc.

Wilson himself is supervising the project for Capitol Records.

"I've checked out the mastering on the 'Pet Sounds' reissue, it sounds great, and they're going to release it on compact disc soon."

An event even more eagerly anticipated by Beach Boys fans is the issue of something resembling "Smile," the legendary

follow-up to "Pet Sounds." Some of the material, including "Good Vibrations," has appeared on various albums, but never together, and never complete.

Says Wilson: "The 'Smile' album is half and half. We're not sure if we're going to do it or not, but we're going to take all of the 'Smile' tapes from the library vaults and check them out."

"I've already listened to 15 of the tapes, and they're pretty good. It's not really in the bag yet, but there's the semblance of an album."

Daily Express.

• BRIAN WILSON: Brian Wilson (Sire). Eponymously titled solo slot for a man who 20 years ago was an inspiration to pop and surf boarding sellers. Little has changed. The magic is still there even if the music itself is stuck in the sixties repeat groove. A recreation as fine as anything the Beach Boys brought us in those golden days. Once in the timewarp, all you experience is good vibrations.

ELEKTRA: "Cocktail." Studio: Touchstone. Director: Roger Donaldson. Stars: Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, Elisabeth Shue. Storyline: Veteran bartender Doug Coughlin (Brown) teaches the tricks of the trade to newcomer Brian Flanagan (Cruise), who becomes a hot new drinkmaster but must evaluate his profession's various temptations and illusions when he falls in love with a down-to-earth artist (Shue). Soundtrack artists: Robbie Nevil, the Fabulous Thunderbirds, John Cougar, the Beach Boys, Bobby McFerrin.

## Wooden medleys mar Beach Boys' show

By SHEL HOROWITZ

LENOX — If there's an award for Most Unsatisfying Rehash, the Beach Boys would get my nomination.

Their only competition might be the disco-Beatles medley, but at least the Beatles had no control over that. The blame for this disastrous concert package Friday night at Tanglewood lies squarely on the shoulders of the Beach Boys themselves.

In fact, in fifteen years of arts reviewing, I cannot remember another performance that so insulted the audience's intellect as the Beach Boys' did. They did not even try.

What was worse, their appearance—before a sparse crowd of about 7,000—was obviously nothing unusual: my suspicion is that every show they play is identical down to the raps.

Their music deserves better than this treatment. This group, including three of the original five members and an additional seven sidemen, was so lifeless that it seemed like someone had handed out guitars to a bunch of robots, wound them up, and told them to play.

Surprisingly, most of the audience was in their teens or early twenties—a testament to the power of the songs when they are done well. Unfortunately, they would have done better to hear a cheap and disinterested bar band hammer out a medley of Beach Boys songs.

One has to wonder why the Beach Boys are doing this. Whatever their motivation, the show they put on was embarrassing. Either they should put some feeling into their show, or opt for retirement.

### WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING YOURSELF MUSIC-WISE?

Do you know that I did an arrangement for "Smile" and "Help Me Get My Friends" ... and when I heard Joe Cocker's version I just died because it was so close to the one that I was going to do?

I think that's groovy because it just proves I was right. I was originally going to record "Bluebird Over The Mountain" for my own album. It's an old song, written in 1937.

### ARE THE FANS OF THE BEACH BOYS UNIQUE?

They really are! We just keep getting new ones, along with holding the old ones. I thought by now all the Beach Boys fans would be dead! But they aren't, they're growing!

It just amazes me when our road manager comes up to us and says what we sold out. I remember when we were in Chicago about two months ago we sold out two concerts. I had thought it would be all heavy blues in Chicago and that we would sell out. And we sold out two concerts!

It was so funny, this girl came up to me outside the hall and didn't know I was in the group. She had to go home for some reason, so she gave me her two tickets.

Well I didn't have any cash on me and I was so hungry, so I sold the two tickets and got five dollars a piece. Then I went out and got a groovy dinner!

### HOW LONG DO YOU SEE THE BEACH BOYS AS A CONCERT ATTRACTION?

I thought that by now people would be saying: "No, we shouldn't go see the Beach Boys because it will be the same old show over again." But it's not.

And look at Peter, Paul and Mary, who have lasted longer than the Beach Boys. They are really my favorite group.

If I had the chance, I'd like to be in the Four Freshmen recording-wise, but appearance-wise I would like to be in Peter, Paul and Mary. I don't think that the people will stop liking us until the hits stop.

### JUST FOR FUN, HAVE YOU A SECRET AMBITION THAT NO ONE WOULD GUESS AS BEING A PART OF BRUCE JOHNSTON?

Yes. I'd like to be a record bootlegger. I'd like to bootleg records. I'd like to illegally copy records and make 40,000 copies of someone else's record and not have to report it to the government.

I'd like to be rich. I'd like to be famous. I'd like to be the money, it would just be for the excitement.

Carl really gets bugged at me when I tell him my secret ambition,

but, honestly, I've always wanted to

be a record bootlegger on the side!

NME interview with Bruce Johnston from 1969. Now we know where all those 'Boots' came from.

and culminating in a flurry of fresh sounding falsettos care of Jeff, Bruce and Carl. Absolutely fantastic.

"Be True To Your School" was enhanced by the spectacular dancing of the University of Las Vegas Cheerleaders who also graced the stage for the surf numbers and encores.

Then for me came the highlight of the show... "Help Me Rhonda". As the band struck up the familiar riff, Brian grabbed his mike and confidently strolled to the front of the stage. At this point I will talk a little about Brian. The poor guy must be sick to death of reading constant updates of his physical state, but as I know everyone is waiting with baited breath, I'll tell you. Simply this... if I could be half as fit as Brian when I reach my mid-forties... well, I would be a very lucky man indeed.

Wearing a blue/grey check jacket and blue denim jeans, Brian looked lean, healthy and superbly fit. Furthermore, I can tell you that he is fully in control of his destiny, alert, happy and quite talkative. Musically, well to quote Jeff Foskett, "Brian is singing like a bird," and he really is. I almost wept with sheer joy when I heard his powerful vocal lead in "Surfer Girl", his evocative rendering of "Wouldn't It Be Nice", and sprang to my feet (along with the audience) when he launched into "Help Me Rhonda", with a zest for performing. Brian didn't keep still. He ran (yes... ran) back and forth across the stage, turning sharply every now and then to face an almost frenzied audience. What a performance... I was bowled over. "Rock 'n' Roll Music" left the crowd no time to get their breath back and they roared in approval as Mike bellowed, "Is everybody ready to go surfin'?"

After the surfin' set the boys left the stage... but the people wanted more. Spurred on by the powerful drum sound of Mike Kowalski (enhanced by lashings of A.D.T. and reverb), Billy Hinsche and the boys performed "Wipeout"

Billy really was in his element, strutting the stage like a true showman. Aided by the truly incredible Jeff Foskett, Billy showed that the Fat Boys' contribution to the hit single "Wipeout" was about as vital to the record as Adolf Hitler was to world peace. Great stuff Billy.

A Roaring "Barbara Ann" and spirited "Fun, Fun, Fun" closed the show leaving the audience elated and the Beach Boys, as always, triumphant.

Before I go, I would like to thank Jeff Foskett, Bruce Johnston, Carl Wilson, Brian Wilson, Mike Love, Bobby Figueroa (a very talented man) Ab Jackson, Chas, Stan, Dave and Tim, very, very, very much for their warm hospitality and help in making me feel at home. Really guys... thanks a lot.

ROBERT TUNICK



Brian.

Mike Love with Robert Tunick.

#### JAN & DEAN - POSSIBLE BRITISH TOUR?

A first-ever visit to the UK by Jan & Dean may be on the cards - providing a concert promoter can be found to offer a tour package at the right price.

Dean, who has never visited Britain despite the dynamic duo's large following over here, believes that the time is ripe for a trip to Europe.

He is keen on playing a tour with venues of different sizes, possibly with the Surfin' Lungs as support.

The fact that the pair played a record 85 concerts in the US last year showed that their popularity is as big as ever - with 80 per cent of the audiences being under 21, according to Dean.

Lorimar, producers of Dallas and Dynasty, have been working on a video of the Jan & Dean late '86 China tour and this could be in the shops in the next few months.

I have been making inquiries with a number of promoters over the past few weeks but if anyone has any further ideas on the possibility of setting up a tour please could they contact me at the address below and I will pass all information on to Dean a.s.a.p.

ROBIN JONES  
Newlyn  
120 Malthouse Lane  
Earlswood  
Solihull B94 5SA (Tel: Earlswood 2531)

JAN AND DEAN

On the last weekend of our vacation we heard, quite unexpectedly, that Jan and Dean were playing at Discovery Park Sacramento and although we had made other plans for that day, we thought this was too good an opportunity to miss. Jan and Dean were extremely friendly and Dean said that there is a possibility of a visit to England sometime in the near future.

As expected the concert was excellent and it was great to see Jan taking a more active part. The encore was especially memorable for the author of this article (and this is the main reason for adding a Jan and Dean review to the end of this article) - I was invited on stage by Dean for the encore. This was particularly special for me as I have been playing Beach Boys/Jan and Dean songs for many years with a surf band in Cornwall called "Coconut Grove". My performance consisted of doing backup vocals on Barbara Ann and Dean also handed me his guitar for the last part of this final set.

Not only was there an audience of about 6000 people, this concert was also being transmitted live by a local radio station - KHYL Sacramento. As you can imagine I was completely overwhelmed.

My only disappointment is that I do not have a taped copy of my performance so if anyone reading this article has a copy, or knows of someone who may have recorded this "historic" performance, then please let me know. I would be very grateful.

Graham Hicks. If you can help write to, 3, Ropehaven Close, St. Austell Cornwall, PL25 4DZ.

# B E A C H   B O Y S C O N V E N T I O N

DATE: Saturday 24th September 1988

VENUE: Visitation Parish Centre, adjoining 358 Greenford Road, Greenford, Middlesex.

TIME: 12 noon to 6.00 pm.      Doors open 11.00 am.

As I sit and compile this article in early July it is very difficult to make many specific statements concerning this year's celebration. Much of what happens will revolve around Mike's sojourn to the Golden state for most of August. We have approached David Leaf to be our special guest but at this time of writing are unable to confirm any arrangements. For those of you that might be a little in the dark there is a separate piece concerning the significance of David Leaf elsewhere.

TICKETS: Regretfully I cannot add much from my section in STOMP 67 here but the entry fee should be approximately £5.00.

ENTRY: The doors open at 11.00 am.

TABLES: Tables are 4' x 2' and, as usual, are £10.00 each. ANYONE WISHING TO SELL OR TRADE ANYTHING MUST HAVE A TABLE. Applications should be made before the 20th September, as after this they will be £15.00 each. When applying for a table please enclose an SAE (address in STOMP 67). An alteration to previous years in that table applicants will not be allowed access to the hall before 10.00 am.

LOCATION: Please see adjacent map.

No. 92 bus runs from Greenford Station to right outside the Centre. BADGES: These are being dealt with as I write and we do have a problem with quantities, so there may be more than two hundred. No promises though.

TIMETABLE: Sorry, but with reference to the opening paragraph, there is nothing definite at this time.  
RAFFLE: )  
AUCTION: )

NOTICE: THE ORGANISERS RESERVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE ANY ADJUSTMENTS OR ALTERATIONS CONCERNING THE PROCEEDINGS THEY DEEM NECESSARY.

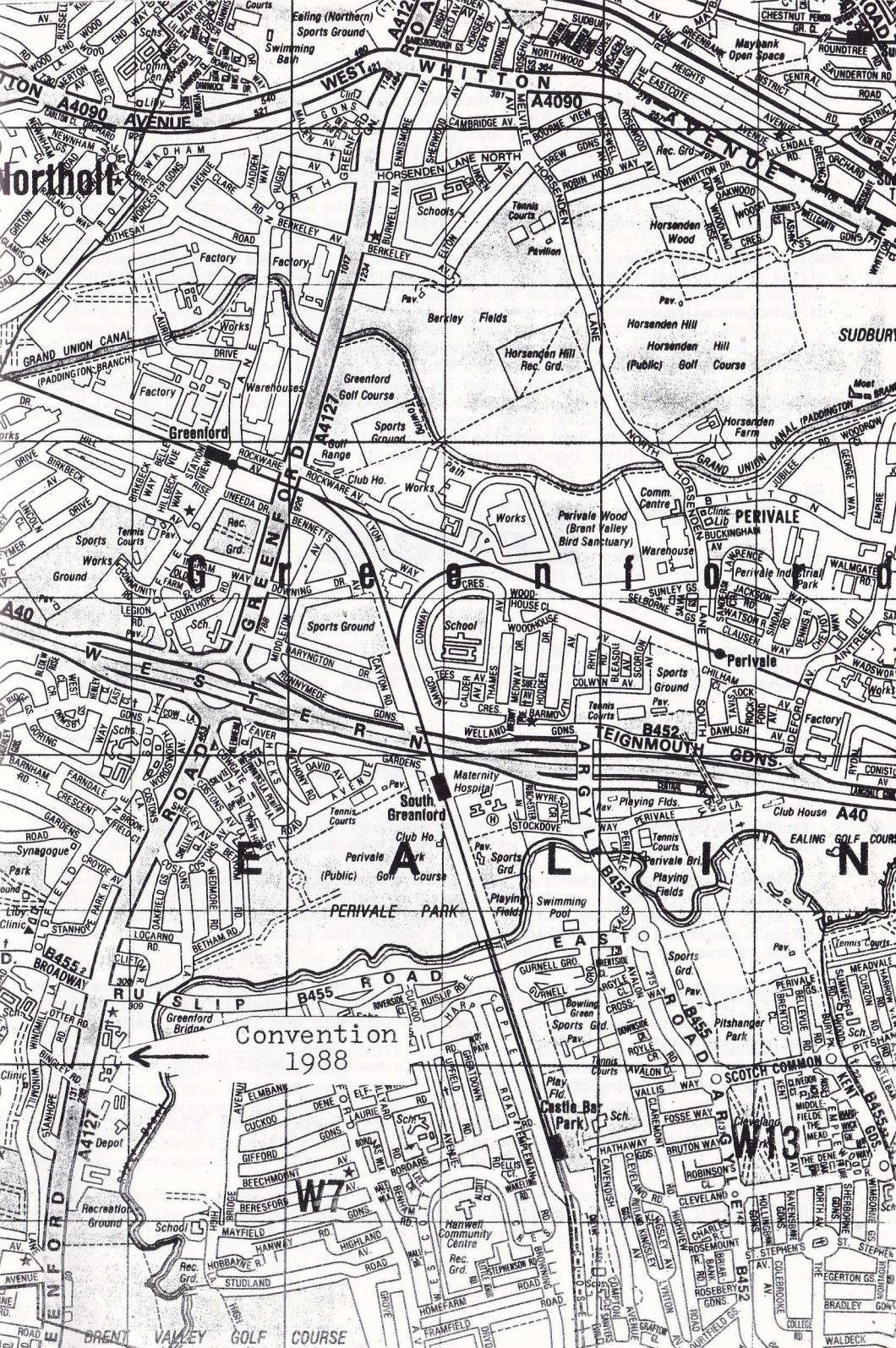
The above is printed in conjunction with the information given in STOMP 67.

ROY GUDGE & MIKE GRANT

## DAVID LEAF

Those possessing either version of David's seminal Brian Wilson/Beach Boys biography will require no further explanation as to why we have invited him to be the guest of honour at this year's Convention, and may safely pass over the following, which will (hopefully) enlighten the less fortunate.

In one sense, David has, for the past decade or so, been placed in an enviable and unique position from which to observe and chronicle the Beach Boys' recurring attempts at self-destruction and Brian's climb back from the pit, for being an Easterner transplanted to California he has both the geographical proximity and emotional distance to achieve a more than usually balanced view of a more than unusually bizarre situation. It could be argued that his gradual absorption into Brian's circle of trusted confidants and friends since 1978 has necessarily compromised his original objectivity - if so, I for one have failed to notice the process.



And it is this continuing objectivity that makes David the ideal guest for us. Sure, it would be grand to have a Beach Boy or two turn up, but people who believe in their own publicity and mythology tend to make damn poor question-and-answer subjects. This is not to imply that, should he attend, David will spill the dirt or rattle any skeletons (not only is he far too responsible a journalist, he's also far too fine a person to stoop thus...), but what he can and thankfully does offer is the view of a semi-insider blessed with a generous dash of commonsense. In other words, the closest approach to the truth about what's really going on in southern California these days.

So, if David does accept our invitation (and due to, amongst other things, the writers strike in Hollywood, he cannot say yea or nay until August), feel free to ask him anything about Brian and the Beach Boys: some of his answers may change your conceptions of this band we consider 'ours'.

Finally, and shamefully, there is one thing about David that I've neglected to mention, if only because it's something I've taken wholly for granted these last eleven years, since the first issue of the sadly missed Pet Sounds magazine: he is a very fine writer, probably the best writer ever to apply his talents to the often-unrewarding subject of the Beach Boys, and we at STOMP count ourselves fortunate in his association with the magazine. Those of us who have made the pilgrimage to the West Coast consider ourselves fortunate to have met him. Here's hoping he makes it over.

AGD

## Letters

Dear STOMP

I just got #67, and the thought struck me that it's the last time you'll have to do an issue where the past is the main focus, because by the time you go to print with #68, everybody will have heard Brian's record, and, I hope, will love it as much as I do.

A few thoughts on #67...

AGD's editorial was terrific. I wish that he was wrong, that their reaction would be more generous and less self-centred, but I think he might have hit the nail squarely on the head. Too bad for them, really.

Exciting to read about the plans for the convention. I'm certainly going to try and make this one, although I really won't know for sure until early September.

It seems that James Crowther's article, which accuses me of perpetrating the "Mike is a villain" theory, calls out for a response. I really don't know how to do that briefly, other than to say that although James makes a number of valid points about Brian's responsibilities, I think he has so many of his facts wrong that it would take a lot of space to set him straight.

It's always interesting to read differing points of view, but in this case, there really isn't a lot of room for opinion. If you love Brian and his music, Mike Love is "the enemy", because he undermined Brian's artistic instincts when it counted, back in 1966, and he never stopped.

Fortunately, Brian has survived to give us this new and wonderful record, and I hope that it is just the beginning of his solo career.

Keep up the good work. And get going on #68. I can't wait to read how everybody responds to Brian's album.

Best

DAVID LEAF

Dear STOMP

Just a line to say I consider Brian's LP as good as LOVE YOU which makes it 1,000,000 times better than anything else in Rock History and if there is any justice in this world he will receive an Emmy or whatever it is they get for records.

"Rio Grande", "Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight", "Baby Let Your Hair Grow Long" are all superb and for the first time in living memory I have a new BB-affiliated record of which I am proud. I still can't believe how good it is and no matter how much Landy has feathered his own nest, what he has achieved makes it all worthwhile.

Thanks for keeping the mag going through all the hard times, now we will have enough momentum for 50 more issues at least because everyone will want to review what is without doubt the most exciting and rewarding LP I've heard in years.

All the best

JAMES CROWTHER

-oo-

Dear STOMP

Why is the magazine called STOMP, which seems a strange title for the Beach Boys' sound, and what is the significance of the little hut that appears on the cover?

I recall a year or so ago you said you were producing a discography/listing of all the group's recordings and contributions - is it still likely to materialise? Perhaps you should launch it to coincide with the release of Brian's LP and SMILE - should give you plenty of time! (Only joking.)

Thanks for a great magazine.

ALAN SEDUNARY

Beach Boys Stomp was a very early Beach Boys instrumental and one of the first things the group recorded. This was the title chosen by STOMP's founder, Andrew Bainborough. Maybe today the title seems to suggest early surfin' sounds and is a little outdated but we don't intend to change it.

As for the significance of the little hut on the cover which we consider our logo - it's adapted from the SMILEY SMILE cover.

We do still intend to publish the discography one day, it's just a matter of finding the time to put it all together.

MIKE

Dear STOMP

Just a quote from Ry Cooder in his tour programme from the present tour, talking about film music.

"To tell you the funniest thing of all, the guy that made Tom Cruise's latest picture ('Cocktail') had him lipsynch my version of "All Shook Up" in the movie. I couldn't believe it. Just to take it one stage further, Terry Melcher (an LA record producer for whom Cooder played sessions in the '60s) called me on the phone after all these years and said, "I'm doing a Beach Boys tune for the new Tom Cruise film, will you come and play on it?" I hadn't played for this guy in 20 years. I went down and it was just like I was a teenager again, doing the same things he wanted me to do then.

I also overheard someone who had spoken to Jim Dickinson (in Cooder's band who alternates with Van Dyke Parks on keyboards) say that when it was put to him that VDP may be working on Beach Boys material he did not deny it and said maybe.

SIMON HARDY

# THE ENDLESS SUMMER

IT'S probably pouring with rain by now, but the sunny days we were vouchsafed by the Almighty last week prompted me—and almost certainly many others to wipe the dust off the pile of mouldy oldies fondly known as my "summer music."

Just as it's tied to emotional memories, so most pop music evokes specific times of year. Most of the best pop picks on summer, simply because that (ideally speaking) is when the nights are longer, the girls are prettier, and you can take the hood off your sportscar and bomb off into the glorious sunset.

There's never been any better summer music than that created by Brian Wilson for the Beach Boys, between '62 & '67. More so even than Chuck Berry, Wilson's compositions sum up what pop was always about, and what we're the poorer for having lost.

The very early Sixties, the years just before the Beatles were the most unproductive that white pop has known, until Wilson came along with "Surfin'" a weird mixture of goofy acapella-style vocal and Chuck Berry riffs recorded in the Wilson's garage — wouldn't you know? Their first album, titled "Surfin' Safari" (Capitol T-1008) after their second, he was incredibly naive, a combination of Berry-derived songs and "Pipeline" style instrumental work. In '69, though, you could hear the beginnings of a choral style, those stripped-down harmonies lurking behind the light lead vocal.

**T**HIS led to the totally devastating "I Get Around" (on "All Summer Long," T-2110), where the voices appeared to provide the vocal impetus, achieving equal status with the bizarre whirling organ, the staccato guitar, and the simple, thudding drums.

Other good car songs here are the title track and "Don't Back Down," while "Little Honda" was a side-track into moribund. There was a great ballad, too, called "Girls On The Beach"; it was the song from a very forgettable surfing movie of the same name, and could have been retitled "Surfer Girl Part 2." But it still makes me too cut particular those sudden shifts between major and minor keys (the kind of trick which brought Lennon and McCartney to intellectual respectability, but which in Brian's hands, went unnoticed — maybe it worked too well).



The voice lines interweave and overlap, wind round each other, producing a seamless whole in which not one note takes precedence over another.

This innovation seems to mark out Wilson as on the same scale as any vocal music in the world, and I don't expect to be contradicted when I say that Brian Wilson is a genius.

**B**UT he was a genius who never received his just acclaim, and it's possible that he never will. The main reason for the absurdly slim sales during 1966, he released an album called "Pet Sounds" (ST-2454).

Melody Maker 1971.

A reappraisal of the Beach Boys by Richard Williams

THIS was the first in his magnificent sequence of love-ballads, all of which became marked by sumptuous orchestrations, and usually by the aching falsetto. "Surfer Girl," from the album of the same name (T-1981), was the next, and very possibly the best: from the first notes you could feel the sun, sense the texture of tanned skin.

"I'm Sorry," from the same month, developed the theme of Brian's personal claustrophobia: "In my room I look out all my worries and my fears." The wonderful interweaving harmonies at the end of the middle eight ("Laugh at yesterday, also think at complexities to come," and the whole record was a tight, compact statement of almost stifling intensity.

"Shut Down Vol. 2" (T-2027) contained perhaps his most acclaimed ballad, the classic "Don't Worry Baby" in its purest form. It began to play a part: the voices seemed to melt into the softly pounding backing track, so that bass voice and bass guitar became almost indistinguishable.

His dance songs were beginning to get a bit heavy too, and the emphasis was now on cars rather than "woodies." "Fun Fun Fun" began with a Berry guitar intro, and was about a girl borrowing her father's T-Bird, cruisin' through the burger joints with the radio on full-blast. On it, too, voices and instruments began to achieve more organic unity.

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"Wendy," though, was perhaps the most striking track, developing the spatial relationships intimated in "Don't Worry Baby." This in turn led to a series of superb up-tempo hit records: "Dance Dance Dance," "When I Grow Up," and "Help Me, Rhonda" ("Beach Boys Today" — T-2269) and "California Girls" and "Let Him Run Wild" ("Summer Days" — T-2454).

Of these, "California Girls" was easily the most outstanding, a kind of ultimate anthem to the Wilsons' home state.

It begins with an out-of-tempo instrumental section, then moves into a loping run over which the vocal strides. Fairground fun leads into a circular vocal fade which had its antecedents in "Kiss Me, Baby" (from the "Today" LP).

**H**IS last real throw was the "Smiley Smile" album (ST-9001), which contained the epic "Good Vibrations" (the second-best single ever!) and the much-untitled "Honey, Honey" (Wilson, a two-minute clip from a two-hour work written in collaboration with Van Dyke Parks).

"Smiley Smile" was either ignored or dismissed by the reviewers, and has since become The Great Un-discovered Pop Album. It contains, from start to finish, mostly vocal with minimal instrumental accompaniment — which have all the epigrammatic, enigmatic power of Japanese haiku. More:

"Wonderful" and "Little Pad" contain passages written in the conditional tense (i.e. the songs move easily between reality and fantasy), a technique evolved by Godard in the cinema and which only Wilson, as far as I know, has picked up in pop.

Since then, he seems to have lost heart. There have been some nice cuts, like "Darlin'" from "Wild Honey" (ST-2859) and "I Can Hear Music" and "Cottonfields" from "20/20" (E-ST 133), but the focus, once so tight and sharp, has been lost.

The analogy with the cinema is quite a good one. Wilson always was a director, moving his camera around to find angles on a rather narrow subject, and his movie-songs comprise a body of work which few can match.

The fact that such a talent can possibly become "unfashionable" frankly sickens me.

Personal Opinion by Richard Williams Melody Maker 1971.

OH BOY, just how wrong can you be?

Recently I wrote a longish piece on the Beach Boys, attempting to return Brian Wilson to his rightful place at the very top of pop's pantheon. That was okay, but towards the end I dismissed all their post-1967 albums with a statement to the effect that they contained some nice tracks, but weren't anything like up to the standard of Brian's earlier work.

That's a good example of the attitude I was condemning when trying to vindicate the much maligned "Smiley Smile," the attitude which listens yet doesn't listen, which makes facile verdicts without having considered the evidence in depth.

In the weeks since writing that first piece, I've listened to little except the latest four Beach Boys albums: "Wild Honey" (Capitol ST2859), "Friends" (ST-2895), "20/20" (E-ST 133), and "Sunflower" (Stateside SSLA-S251). It's the first time I've sat down and dug hard into these particular records, and it's remarkable to say that whole new world has opened up.

In some ways I find this even more interesting than the fascination of early Beach Boys stuff, because admiration for the recent records isn't coloured or emphasised by that most distorting of emotions: nostalgia. These newer albums stand (or fall) by what they are, rather than by memories of listening to them on the way to the seaside in 1965.

"Wild Honey" and "Friends" were released in 1968. The former is loosely

just piano, bass-guitar, and drums, saying more than most orchestras can.

"20/20" saw them getting back into the charts, with the engagingly old-fashioned "Do It Again" and "I Can Hear Music," the latter a Spector/Barry/Greenwich song on which Carl did a better job of production than Spector managed for the Ronettes that same year (1959). The latter song soon harked back to "Sloop John B." which is perhaps why it made the chart.

The most interesting songs come as a trio at the end of the second side. They begin with Dennis's "Never Learn Not To Love," a very "sweet" song with, again, an unusual rhythmic approach, in the way that the metre switches from 4/4 to 3/4. Then comes "Smiley Smile," which is perhaps the title cut of the group's next album, due out in Britain later this month.

The song is part of the ill-fated collaboration between Brian Wilson and Van Dyke Parks, and was due for release on the "Smiley Smile" LP, which was shelved in 1967 because Wilson felt that one of the songs, called "Fire," was somehow responsible for an outbreak of fires in the Los Angeles area.

The Beach Boys' next single, out here around June 11, will be "Long Promised Road," a Carl Wilson composition on which Carl plays all the instruments and sings all the vocal lines.

In October and November, the group — minus Brian Wilson — will be in Europe for a concert tour which will include British dates.

## Beach Boys

### 'gem' due

"SURF'S UP," the unheard Beach Boys' track which Leonard Bernstein once called "one of the all-time greatest rock records," will be the title cut of the group's next album, due out in Britain later this month.

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## Surf's Up

**B**EACH BOYS: "Surf's Up" (Stateside). Here's one that won't disappoint and is undeniably inimitable.

The Beach Boys are back in fashionable favour, and they've produced an album which fully backs up all that's recently been written and said about them.

Now, not staying true to the development of their original musical ideas, they've made most of what's currently happening look shiny, and the much-much-weight in the absence of pure pop genius.

It begins with a more fully worked-out production of "Cottonfields," the old Leadbelly song, which appeared in a skeletal form on "20/20." Although it's not one of Brian's songs, it nevertheless has to be one of their most successful cuts, from the warping steel guitar through to the gutter perfection of the vocals. It also grooves like "Sloop John B." and for that reason was a hit — like "I Can Hear Music" a year before. The lead vocal (Al Jardine, I think) is magnificently performed by harmonies, nor the traditional prediction of Dennis Wilson's brief "Be Still."

"Let The Wind Blow," a lifting waltz is the direct father of the title-track of "Friends," the first Beach Boys album from which not one cut became a hit in this country at least. Kids getting into Cream and "Spoonful" weren't about to take the time to appreciate the soaring vocals of "Friends," brilliantly counterpointed by harmonies, nor the traditional prediction of Dennis Wilson's brief "Be Still."

This album was the first to bear concrete testimony to the group's involvement with the Marhsalls (although the sleeve of "Smiley Smile" contained the Indian saying: "The smile you send out returns to you"), and almost the only song and arrangement that has that subtle quasi-religious feeling.

The best part of the record is the opening pair of songs on the second side: "Anna Lee," "The Healer," and "Little Bird." "Anna Lee" has one of their best ensemble vocals with a simple, unadorned lead, and the word "healer" is each time given a superb ambiguous harmony. The backing, too, is perfect:

just piano, bass-guitar, and drums, saying more than most orchestras can.

"20/20" saw them getting back into the charts, with the engagingly old-fashioned "Do It Again" and "I Can Hear Music," the latter a Spector/Barry/Greenwich song on which Carl did a better job of production than Spector managed for the Ronettes that same year (1959). The latter song soon harked back to "Sloop John B." which is perhaps why it made the chart.

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Beach Boys  
revisited  
—again

of "Our Prayer" and "Cabinessence." "Sunflower" didn't really provide an answer, but was more of a series of sideways steps — some successful, some not.

In terms of development, it was difficult to see where Brian could move, vocally, after the brilliance of "I Get Around" to their logical conclusion: despite their furious internal activity, the vocal streams are so dense that they form a single immobile bloc.

In terms of development, it was difficult to see where Brian could move, vocally, after the brilliance of "I Get Around" to their logical conclusion: despite their furious internal activity, the vocal streams are so dense that they form a single immobile bloc.

Now, not staying true to the development of their original musical ideas, they've made most of what's currently happening look shiny, and the much-much-weight in the absence of pure pop genius.

First of all, the title-track (the song originally written for the never-released "Smiley Smile") is the combination of Neolithic French horns, silvery double-calls, and tinkling xylophone. It's underpinned by a marvellously simple bass part, yet in the middle section he has the intelligence to employ just piano, and the bare-bones of an organ (I think) before plunging into those rattled harmonies.

But that ain't all, and I'll love Carl's two songs, with words by Jack Palance. "Long Promised Road" are simply the best "inner quest" songs I've heard, and they last nothing in the way of jingles or arrangements. Brian and Jack contribute the sad, delicate "A Day In The Life Of A Tree" (the only worthwhile ecology song), but they're not upstaged by Bruce Johnston, whose "Disney Girls (1957)" says a lot of what many of us are beginning to feel about our fading youth. The only bummers are those in which Al Jardine and Mike Love are involved, and — of course — EMI had to choose one of those ("Don't Go Near The Water") as the new single, when "Surf's Up" simply cries to be heard.

This album is a blast of truth at the time we need it most. Let's just hope that Brian feels like sticking around a while longer.

R.W.

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## The Beach Boys



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## BRIAN WILSON

### Brian Wilson

Produced by Brian Wilson, Jeff Lynne, Lenny Waronker, Andy Paley, & Russ Titleman 1/4/2-25669



- The mastermind of the Beach Boys delivers his first solo album ever.
- Performances and production values show Wilson at the peak of his game.
- The gorgeous, aptly titled "Melt Away", "Baby Let Your Hair Grow Long," and "Night Time" are among the album's many highlights.
- Guest performers include Christopher Cross, Elliot Easton (Cars), Philippe Saisse (Outloud), Dean Parks, plus co-producers Paley and Lynne.
- There is advance interest in Love And Mercy at retail, press and radio levels and plans are afoot for major promo.
- First single is "Love And Mercy."

**SIDE ONE:** Love And Mercy ■ Walkin' The Line ■ Melt Away ■ Baby Let Your Hair Grow Long ■ Little Children ■ One For The Boys ■ There's So Many

**SIDE TWO:** Night Time ■ Let It Shine ■ Meet Me In My Dreams Tonight ■ Rio Grande

## NEWS ..... NEWS ..... NEWS .....

Needless to say, the release of Brian's eponymous solo album eclipses all other news... but as life goes on so does STOMP.

The U.K. release of the first 45 from BRIAN WILSON has been put back to some time in August: on the bright side however, as well as a 12" single, a CD single looks possible. Both will apparently share the following tracks - "Love And Mercy". Plus "He Couldn't Get His Poor Old Body To Move", "One For the Boys". Due on the 8th. Speaking of CD singles that of the Fat Boys' "The Twist" also features the LP version of "Wipeout".

On the night of July 4th the Westward One organisation presented a preview of Brian's album spread over some two hours and also featured an interview with our man and two archive tracks, "Christine" (which proved to be the original version of "Livin' Doll") and "Goodnight Irene". The latter title will be released on FOLKWAYS - A VISION SHARED on Columbia during the first week of August.

Despite what the label and Mike Love may say, when the Beach Boys were offered the Barbie flexidisc project they refused, thus leaving Brian to do it.

Speaking of Brian's former band although "Kokomo" was released some weeks ahead of the original date we were given, there is currently no projected UK release for either the 45 or soundtrack LP. However, the band - less Brian, of course - did lipsynch to the song during their 4th July Disneyworld TV special appearance, not to mention performing "Wipeout" with the Fat Boys...

And finally, the 25th anniversary TV special was broadcast recently - but only in the Central TV region. Curiously, it included five songs not shown in full on the official version, these being "Sloop John B", "Barbara Ann", "Surfer Girl", "Do It Again" and "Come Go With Me".

AGD and MIKE

### Brian Wilson



#### Brian Wilson (Side/Reprise)

Last week, long-time KROQ new music jock Rodney Bingenheimer (a.k.a. Rodney On The Rock) couldn't contain himself when he opened his show by yelling, "We have the new Brian Wilson album for you tonight...and it is godhead!" If you've been a fan of The Beach Boys, and if you're aware of the tough times Brian Wilson has experienced over the last decade, then you know that this solo record is not only a personal triumph for the artist, but a true gift of music from one of rock's most important and underrated talents. Brian credits Dr. Eugene E. Landy, Executive Producer for the LP (he also co-writes a few of the songs), "for saving my life and inspiring, overseeing and fighting for me this entire album." Even though the album features Andy Paley on guitar, bass and drums, Michael Bernard on computer programming and production/writing/playing help from Jeff Lynne, Russ Titleman, Elliot Easton and many more, it's the multi-talents of Brian Wilson that motivates this record. It's apparent that it was Brian Wilson who provided The Beach Boys with their heart and soul. The vocals alone are rough to knock any Beach Boys fans into oblivion, not to mention the host of well written and magnificently produced songs. "Love And Mercy" debuts out of the box at #74\*. (Please see New Action Airplay for radio's reaction.) We've also become very fond of "Walkin' The Line," a song that captures the feeling of the 60's with total 80's confidence. "Night Time" has an obvious radio flair, and "Let It Shine" combines Jeff Lynne's production with Wilson's studio smarts. Also check out "There's So Many" and the closing tour de force, "Rio Grande."



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